



THE VOICE

February 2022

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The Other Side of History

Molly Fox with interview from
Nhyira Nkansah

February is the month of love. With February break just in reach and Valentine's day starting it up, people tend to forget about the celebration of history occurring during the entire month. Black History Month, taking place during all 28 days, is an important start in celebrating and recognizing the accomplishments of black people and people of color in history.

Chelmsford, while having an overwhelming 89% white majority, needs to be more proactive in making changes in our town, starting where learning takes place. Although these changes won't be immediate, we need to start by looking into the history as well as the current problems with our curriculum.

Black History Month originated in 1915, when Carter G. Woodson created the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. 11 years later, on February 7, 1926, Woodson initiated the first "Negro History Week" to celebrate and raise awareness of Black history.

This was turned into a month-long celebration and renamed Black History Month by Texas A&M University Afro-American history professor Albert Broussard in 1976. Black History Month has become not only a recollection of the past but the celebration of

Black History Month has become not only a recollection of the past but the celebration of all the people who have fought for their rights and change for others.



Interview with Nhyira Nkansah - cofounder of BSU -

Nhyira Nkansah, a junior and co-founder of the Black Student Union at Chelmsford High School talks about the curriculum at CHS and the different issues that still stand.

**Do you feel represented in CHS?
Are there ways for POC to create
their own community within CHS?**

Do I feel represented? Not necessarily, mostly because the population is mostly white kids, so that's expected but I do feel like people of color

can create their own community. I know I've helped create a Black Student Union to create a community for the black kids so I feel like if anyone has a desire to create a community, we definitely have the chance to do that.

Do you think the CHS history curriculum should be changed?

I feel like there should be more emphasis on black people in history, I just feel like there's so much that goes untold about our stories. When it was Veterans Day, I did some research and I learned about a whole group of black American soldiers that played a huge part in the war.

There's so much that goes on in history with black people and I feel like it isn't always highlighted. If we want to understand the bigger story, the bigger picture of things, especially if you want to talk about the foundations of America, then highlighting the past of black America needs to be done.

Do you think that the Black Lives Matter Movement has changed what students learn during Black History Month?

No, I feel like the Black Lives Matter movement has definitely called out teachers on not highlighting certain social issues but I don't think it has pushed anyone, not that I've seen, to talk more about these issues.

Still in classes we tend to talk more about international affairs than we do about the domestic problems that occur with black people.

A common ideology is that "oh, it makes certain kids uncomfortable so we are not going to talk about it" but it reflects my life. That could be me next on that TV screen so if we don't talk about it now, how are we going to prevent someone from being that next suspect?

Do you feel as though when learning about history, teachers "tip toe" around race-related questions?

Definitely. It's one of two things. They either don't want to say something that will offend the black kids or the people of color or they themselves are uncomfortable with the situation.

Maybe they have a certain past, where they were never talked to about these issues and because of that, they don't want to touch on it. That's you fighting your own demons I guess. They definitely do try to be sensitive but then they end up being too over sensitive and then very vague then nothing gets addressed.

“They definitely do try to be sensitive, but then they end up being too oversensitive”

Do you think having more black teachers at CHS would help with that?

Definitely. There's one black teacher at this school, Dr. Kaikai and he's our advisor for the BSU (Black Student

Union). It makes it so much easier to talk about things that we go through because we're talking about it with someone that has experienced it themselves. If there were more black teachers then more black students would be able to express what's going on. It's hard to express this with someone who you're scared is going to target you or can't genuinely sympathize with the situation



Many colleges have classes focused on diversity and African American studies. Do you think CHS would benefit from having an elective like that in our school?

It would be so good. Obviously for white kids if they want to learn more but especially for the black kids at CHS because a lot of them are coming from PWIs (predominantly white institutions).

I was lucky enough to go to a middle school that was very diverse so a lot of our stuff, especially Black History Month would be focused on black people and their accomplishments and I feel like if we did have that then a lot of kids would be able to learn about their past because a lot of black

people don't know where they're from in terms of ancestry so they could learn more about that. It would be awesome for people who want to be allies and people who just don't understand the lives of black people to get a better perspective.

How has social media changed your views on Black History? Do you think it has had a big impact on others at CHS?

Social media has definitely made Black history more mainstream but the only problem is that people think that just because you like a post or repost it on your story for 24 hours, you're making a huge difference.

It definitely feels like performative activism and I have seen some performative people at this school.

You can't force someone to care about something that they don't understand so although they are seeing it constantly, it doesn't guarantee that they are going to fully comprehend and grasp the situation at hand.

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February is Black History Month. Do you think it should be celebrated at CHS or should there be more of an emphasis on it the entire year?

It would be a good start to emphasize Black History Month. The majority of the population is white so it'd be hard to get so many kids that don't really understand it to jump on board to something that's new to them.

They're probably coming from schools that didn't emphasize it. It would definitely be good to start with highlighting black history during Black History Month but eventually incorporating it into everyday lessons and every day talks for the Black students because I know a lot of them tend to huddle with each other because they don't feel heard or seen.

If we had more conversations about that regularly, then it would make the black students at CHS feel more open to interacting with others at CHS and speaking up.

Having difficult conversations in class and going out of your way to learn more about black history is something that we all can do to step towards a change in our curriculum this month.

In literature or history, being able to see a reflection of ourselves is validating and makes us feel alive.

If we add additional classes that focus on black culture or bring in more teachers that look like the students at our school, change will come.



February is Black History Month

If we had more conversations about that regularly, then it would make the black students at CHS feel more open to interacting with others



Shin Megami Tensei V Video Game Review

Chase Spengler

The Shin Megami Tensei series has long been overshadowed by its sibling series, Persona, only receiving a fraction of the attention and sales. However, with the 5th entry (technically), the series has finally seemed to break out of its shell to reach a larger audience. From the more streamlined mechanics and greater quality of life, to the gorgeous and detailed environments, SMT V stands as a triumph of turn-based RPGs (role-playing game), and a game absolutely worth picking up.



The atmosphere of SMT V is so dense, you'd swear you could feel the dry desert air on your skin. After walking around Tokyo a bit, the player character is trapped in a collapsing tunnel, and awakens to find themselves in a twisted, destroyed version of Tokyo known as Da'at, now crawling with demons.

Fortunately, just before the demons attack, a strange man called Aogami appears and fuses with the protagonist, and together they form a powerful being known as the Nahobino.

They now must set out across this Netherworld, and attempt to find out what happened to Tokyo, and hopefully set things right.

Almost immediately, SMT V sets itself apart from many other RPGs through its combat system. Known as the Press Turn system, the game rewards the player for hitting critical hits and enemy weaknesses by granting the player additional actions, up to a total of 8 actions per turn.

However, missing attacks and using attacks that enemies nullify causes you to lose more actions than you otherwise would, and using attacks the enemy drains or repels ends your turn immediately. It's a relatively simple concept, but it meshes so well with the game's other mechanics that it makes for one of the most dynamic and engaging battle systems in an RPG.

Unfortunately, as engaging as the combat is, the writing in the game isn't up to par. The game's direct predecessor, SMT IV, is incredibly well written, with a cast of interesting and relevant characters. And unfortunately, SMT V didn't live up to the standard that IV set. I didn't expect much out of the plot, given that it was an exploration-based RPG, but I hoped that the characters would make up for it.

To my disappointment, even the best characters were still flat and awkwardly written. There were three main endings, Law, Chaos, and Neutral, each one based in ideology and represented by a different character in the story. But by the time the game asked me to choose my ending, I didn't care enough about any of the characters to feel very strongly about the choice.



The character I was most interested in was Ichiro Dazai, as he's built up well in the first half of the game. However, in the end, even he ended up as a disappointment of a character. It's pretty safe to say that the story of SMT V is a half-baked disappointment.

Thankfully, that doesn't mean there's no good writing anywhere in the game. One of the core mechanics of the series is your ability to recruit the demons you fight, and fuse them together to create stronger party members. To recruit a demon, you need to negotiate with it during a battle, and these demon negotiations are where some of the best writing in the game can be found.

I've never felt as much fear in my life than when the giant spider demon I was trying to recruit asked me, "So, top or bottom?" When a skeleton warrior asked me "Can you smell that scent in the air? That's what survival

of the fittest smells like..." I replied that I preferred the smell of barbeque. He then responded by saying he knew a great barbeque place, and that we should go together sometime.

**That's what
survival of the
fittest smells like!**

The interactions are so absurd and hilarious that I would often try to recruit a demon that I didn't need or want, just so I could see more of the negotiation dialogue. From Mothman calling me a "pretentious little dipsh*t," to an Oni panicking about fanfiction, it's clear a massive amount of work went into this aspect of the game.

Speaking of things that clearly took a massive amount of work, the environments and world design are absolutely stunning. There are four major areas, each of them is absolutely massive, and full of places to explore and things to find.

One of the main collectables are tiny red demons called Miman. Each Miman you find gives you five Glory, a currency that lets you buy permanent upgrades, and for every five Miman you find you will receive a gift from the item shop-owner.

These Miman often have things to say about the situation you find them in, usually tidbits about the area of Tokyo you're in or about the nature of demons. Something I find impressive is

is that, in addition to making many collectables genuinely difficult to find, they're almost always something worth collecting. Sometimes you'll find Grimoires, which can level up your demon party members, or maybe a Talisman, which lets demons of specific races use unique special skills called Magatsuhi skills.

You could find a petrified demon, which can instantly level up every demon in your party, or an essence, that lets you teach your demons different skills, as well as letting you change the Nahobino's weaknesses and resistances. There's rarely a dull moment exploring the world, especially once you reach the final area, which I won't



Shin Megami Tensei V is not a perfect game, and definitely not a perfect SMT game.. The characters are boring and empty, and the bosses can sometimes feel like level walls (especially with the damage scaling with levels, which didn't exist in the series until now).

But I can excuse these flaws because the combat, exploration and gameplay pacing are so fun and satisfying that I, as someone who rarely replays games, have already started my third New Game + playthrough on Hard mode. It has just barely edged SMT IV out as my favorite RPG of all time, and if you've ever had any interest in turn-based RPGs, this is one I'd enthusiastically recommend.



A look into Irish Step and the CHS Irish Step Club

Ellora Smith

Have you ever heard of or watched Irish step dancing? If so, one thing that might come to mind is the color green and four leaf clovers.

Irish step is an interesting style of dance that originated in Ireland and Scotland as folk dancing. Although there already is a Dance Team here at Chelmsford High School (CHS), there is now an official club called the Irish Step Team devoted to purely Irish step led by two fellow students who have been dancing Irish step for the past 10 years.

You could have the chance to learn or improve your Irish step knowledge right here at CHS after school. You can participate through the official Irish Step club that takes place every Thursday from 2:00-2:30 in room 318.

If you have prior Irish dancing experience, other style dancing experience, or even no dancing experience you are welcome to join and learn how to dance this style.

There are many aspects that make up this style of dance, including shoes and music. For example, just like any style of dance there are specific shoes that are worn. Traditional Irish step dancers will wear gillies and hard-shoes.

These are used for different types of steps because they have a different type of effect. Gillies are much lighter while hard shoes are louder and heavier. Another aspect is the instruments and music that is played while dancing.

Many common instruments can include the fiddle, accordion, harp, and banjo. Although Irish dance originated with The Celts, a 2,000 year old civilization, as a folk style of dancing, it has become more mainstream all over the world.



Irish Step Hard Shoes

A good example of this is through the popular performance of Riverdance. Riverdance is a show with choreographed dances and has opened the eyes of many to the world of Irish dancing.

Siobahn Burke, a New York Times dance critic, and former dancer on Riverdance, explains, “ ‘Riverdance’ — and the many spin offs it inspired — also created new career paths for Irish dancers. Whereas before a dancer might compete through her teens, then earn her teaching certificate and open a school, she now had more opportunities to make a living performing.” Riverdance has not only opened the eyes to the world of Irish dance, but also created more opportunities for those dancers dedicated to Irish dancing.



Irish Step Soft Shoes

The Irish Step Team was recently founded by two CHS students: myself, and my friend and fellow dancer Amanda Nutt. We have been dancing and performing together at the same studio for 10 years.

As my freshmen year began, Amanda, a sophomore, and I were discussing what clubs I was thinking of getting involved with this year. As we were talking, we started throwing around the idea of having an Irish step club here and for us to run it. We knew there was already a dance team, but this club would represent just Irish Step, which had not been introduced to CHS yet.

So, we then decided that if we really wanted to start a club that we just should, so we did. With that idea in mind we sent in the official proposal for the Irish Step Team and received approval.



Join the Irish
Step Club
Idepbw7

So, are you interested in the club? If so you can find our flyers posted on the walls, doors, and hallways around the school. Our meetings are every Thursday at 2:00 in room 318 and our Google Classroom code is Idepbw7

Come in with a comfortable pair of

shoes to dance in and a positive attitude to learn steps. We will not just be learning steps, but choreographing dances to perform at local places.

We also have hopes of doing a final dance towards the end of the year to showcase what our club has been doing and learning this past year. Amanda and I hope that this club is really able to flourish in the CHS environment and continue to grow with more people.

To sum it all up, Amanda and myself are very excited to be able to share our love of Irish step to the community and school by having started this club. We cannot wait to continue our meetings every week and have the opportunity to be able to do something like this in our very own school. If you are not convinced now, or have any questions, you can email me at se254111@cpslions.com or Amanda at nm241903@cpslions.com.

You can also follow us on Instagram @chs_irishstep. We hope to see you there!

¹ “Irish Dance.” Dance Us, www.danceus.org/irish-dance/. Accessed 2 Feb. 2022.

² Burke, Siobhan. “I Was a Teenage Riverdance.” The New York Times, A.G Sulzberger, 4 Mar. 2020, www.nytimes.com/2020/03/04/arts/dance/riverdance-25th-anniversary.html. Accessed 2 Feb. 2022.



Inside the ECO Club

Composting Initiative

Josie Lee

In an effort to make students healthier, schools are required by law to give students fruits or vegetables with their lunches. Unfortunately, not everyone wants them, so a lot of food waste is made up of uneaten fruits and vegetables. Not only is this food waste harmful to the environment, it is also a missed opportunity. All of the nutrients that could have returned to the earth are instead rotting away in landfills.



Last year the Ecology Club launched a composting initiative. Every day after school a couple club members would visit the kitchen and take any leftover fruits and vegetables to the compost bins outside.

When the spring and summer months approach, the compost will be used in flower beds in the front of the school. When there is enough compost, we're planning on expanding the composting to the middle schools.

Not only does it reduce food waste, it provides opportunities for students to get involved in the community, and to volunteer, and create a healthier school environment. With help from the recycling committee we are getting ready to start a Pilot Program to extend composting to the entire high school.

For this initiative to be the most effective, we're hoping to get the entire school involved. The plan is to install composting bins alongside the garbage bins. Instead of being restricted to kitchen leftovers, students can dispose of their fruits and vegetables themselves.

Making sure that non-compostable waste doesn't end up in these bins will require a schoolwide effort to educate the students on what we are doing and how this will benefit us. This will further reduce food waste and provide more compost to be used at the school and community gardens.

Members of the ecology club will be enforcing what goes into the compost bins. We are hoping that other students will come to do the same.

If you are interested in becoming involved with composting, you can come visit the Ecology club! It's every Wednesday after school in room 114. Let's go green to get our globe clean!

Romance Reads

Lea McGuigan

The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo by Taylor Jenkins Reid

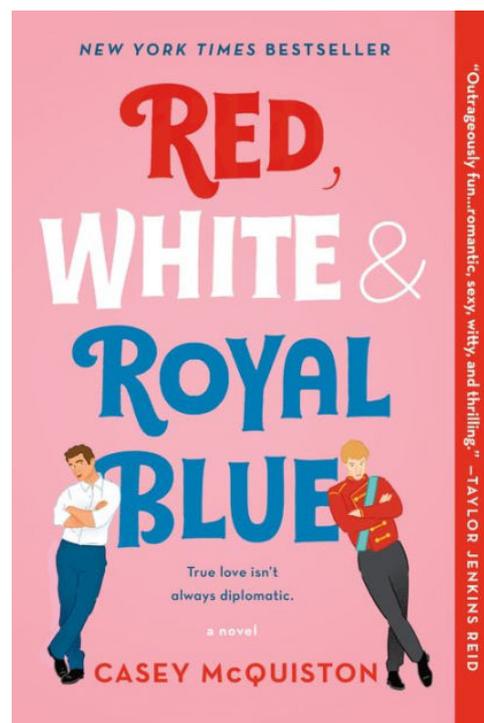
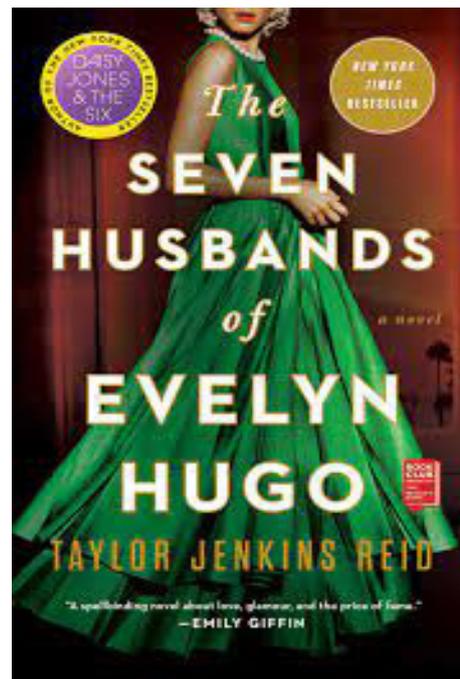
As one of the last movie stars left from the Golden Age of Hollywood, Evelyn Hugo has fascinated many for decades, especially when it comes to her rocky love life.

After unexpectedly choosing struggling journalist Monique Grant to write her biography, Evelyn sits down with Monique and thousands of readers to chronicle her fascinating story from her poor first husband to her brilliant fourth one to her agreeable seventh one.

Red, White and Royal Blue by Casey McQuiston

America's first son Alex is seen as a prince in eyes across America and his turbulent relationship with Prince Henry has sparked tabloid craze for years. With British-American relations on the line, the two countries agreed to establish a fake friendship between the two that ended up working better than expected.

When his mother announces that she is running for reelection, Alex soon finds that his relationship with Prince Henry could undermine her campaign and has to choose to follow his head, which is telling him one thing, and his heart which is saying something completely different



People We Meet on Vacation

by Emily Henry

In college, friends Poppy and Alex agreed to take a vacation together once a year and that tradition continued even when Poppy moved to New York City to work as a travel journalist and Alex moved to Ohio fulfilling his dream of being a high school English teacher. Despite everything, the two always came together for a week every year to get away from everything.

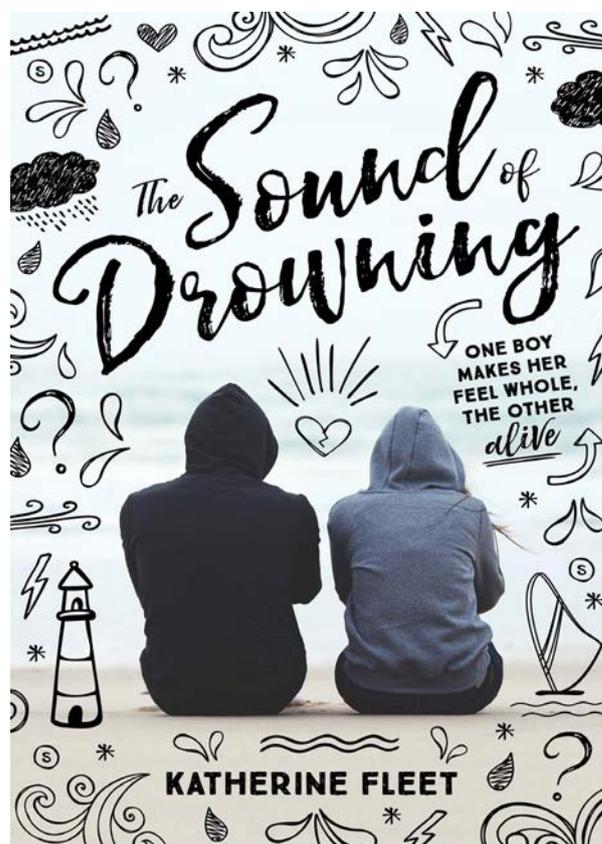
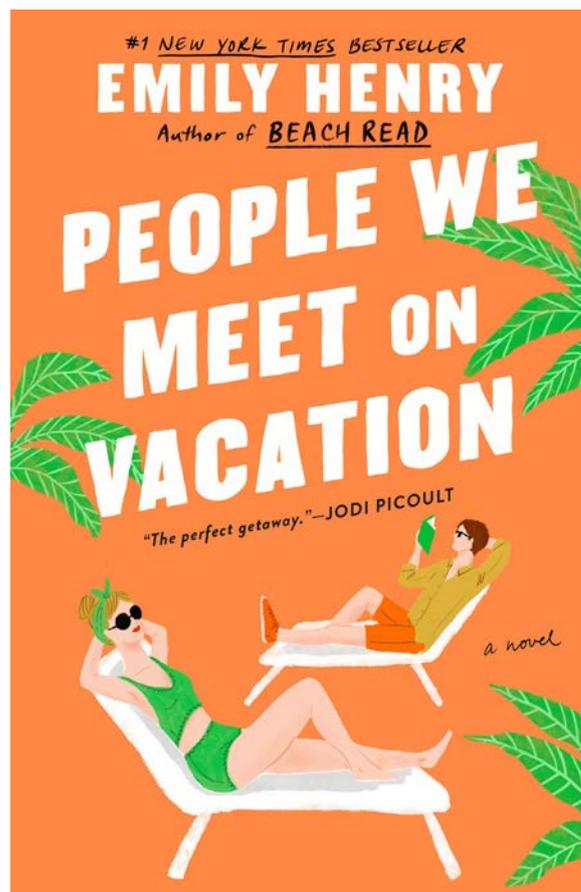
Every year until two years ago when Poppy single handedly ruined any chance of the two ever speaking again. Out of the blue, Poppy messages Alex asking to go on one more vacation together as an act of closure before they go their separate ways. The pressure is on for one spectacular vacation with the two either reuniting or closing the door to each other's hearts once and for all

The Sound of Drowning

Katherine Fleet

After being given a second chance by her first love Ben, Meredith is willing to do anything to make it work, until she meets the outgoing and mysterious new kid Wyatt. Mer is torn between the two boys, one who she would feel empty without, and one who she would feel incomplete without.

When a brutal storm makes its way to her home in the Outer Banks, Mer feels it in more ways than one. As she feels like she's being pushed and pulled every which way, she can feel her heart breaking in two. And everything she was feeling, every secret she has rises to the surface.



The problem with Radio

Airplay

Jennifer Yu

I hate radio airplay.
But I love it too.

Today, radio airplay is crucial to every artists' career. Want to chart #1 on the Billboard Hot 100? Need radio airplay. Want to be nominated for almost any music award show? Want to be a known mainstream artist? Yup, you better have radio airplay.

With such importance in the music industry, you'd think radio stations would try to make getting radio airplay fair game to all artists. But sadly, this is far from the truth.

I still vividly remember the radio songs that played on road trips to New York. The same few songs. Those several songs played so often that the lyrics to them are now permanently burned into my head.

To some, this may be a perk. Having a few songs to represent a generation. But this is detrimental to the careers of non-mainstream (non-pop) music.

Let's take a look at the Billboard Hot 100 Chart for example. This chart is notorious for determining the direction of an artists' career.

As an example, let's dive deeper into the successful charting of group BTS and solo artist Olivia Rodrigo.

BTS is a massively successful boy group, with a nearly 32 Million+ following on Twitter. It is without a doubt that their music has made a connection with many across the globe.

However, it took them nearly 7 years until they finally gained recognition on the Billboard Charts, placing first with their single Dynamite in August of 2020.



Compare this to the likes of Olivia Rodrigo who charted #1 on the Billboard Hot 100 with her debut single, "Drivers License".

What's the key difference here? Going back again to two words: radio airplay.

The Definition

Radio airplay is how frequently a song is played on the radio. Typically, the most popular songs are often played while other songs are hardly ever heard. In just a few hours, the same song could be heard on the same station three, four, or even five times.

The Stats

Today, in calculating charting for the Billboard Hot 100, radio airplay accounted for more than 40% of the final outcome.

So what does this mean? It means that radio airplay is almost half of what determines an artists' charting. Coming in at second on importance next to digital sales.

By Chance or By Choice?

If radio airplay is so important? Who, or what, determines what songs get played? The answer: Radio DJ's and social media.



What surprised me is that not many radio stations actually take song requests anymore. More than ever, Radio DJs hold the utmost power in deciding who does, and does not get radio play. But this is problematic for two reasons.

The first being that the radio becomes repetitive. In hindsight, this is highly insignificant compared to the next reason, but still just as important. The radio constantly plays the same 5

artists, if not the same 5 songs, over and over again for months on end. And I know that I'm not the only one who finds this slightly annoying, and boring.

Such playing habits can not only overhype songs, but it can also impede much smaller artists from getting the recognition they deserve. Because, when you're thrown in the mixes of Taylor Swift, Olivia Rodrigo, and whatever song may also be trending at the moment, it's hard to get the general public to notice your music.

But more importantly, comes our second reason DJ control over radio airplay is problematic: racism and xenophobia.

Racism in the Music Industry

Racism in the music industry has been a hot topic in recent years. With rising artists from all over the globe finally receiving recognition, people are beginning to question the integrity of the music industry.

Within the past few years, numerous international artists have reached incredible milestones. Some of them including:

- (2020) Lana Del Ray: Reached 7 Billion Spotify Streams
- (2018) Angéle: Went 5 times platinum, 2x diamond with her album Brol
- (2021) BTS: Most viewed Youtube music video in 24 hours with Butter (108,200,000)

But what do these three artists share in common: they are what radio stations consider foreign artists. Despite the ongoing efforts to advocate for racial equality in today's society, racial discrimination is still evident in today's society, even more so in the music industry.

Although big name artists like BTS and Lana Del Ray on this list have gotten some radio airplay, this airplay just isn't enough.

This is especially frustrating because we know that these artists have large followings, it isn't that there isn't the public demand to hear these songs on the radio. To tell you the harsh truth, it's that the radios don't want to play their music.



Fans vs. Radio Stations

Listeners of international artists have made various efforts to help their favorite artists chart on widely recognized music charts. These efforts include streaming (Youtube, Spotify, Apple Music etc.), buying the artists' music, and yes, requesting radio airplay.

The first two are easily accomplished with a steady fanbase, the third one

not so much. Fanbases often take to Stan Twitter to express their anger and frustrations to radio stations denying their requests, and at times, even mocking their favorite artists on live radio. But seemingly time and time again, their voices are being ignored.

**RADIO DJ BE
LIKE:**



Well, what now?

Unfortunately, there is no immediate solution to changing the minds of radio DJs, but people can still continue to support their favorite artists through streaming platforms such as Spotify and Apple Music.

And although charting on the Billboard Hot 100 can mean a lot to any artist, it is also important to note that it isn't anything. Artists don't need to be a #1 charter to be successful.

Take, for instance, the Backstreet Boys as an example. As successful as they were, and as iconic as they still are, they have never (and I mean never) charted a #1 on the Billboard Hot 100.

So, now we beg to ask the question, do DJs and music charts just not have good music taste? Well, that's up to you to decide.

April Fool's Day Pranks to spice it up this year

Lea McGuigan



PRANK AT YOUR OWN RISK

1. Spray bottle filled with vinegar

This works best when April Fools Day also falls on Easter Sunday as people are more likely to pay special attention to how their hair looks.

Take a spray bottle that is normally used to wet down hair and dump out the water. Fill the spray bottle with vinegar instead, then wait for the poor unsuspecting person to wet their hair with vinegar. The laughs are totally worth the other person's wrath.

2. Confetti on the ceiling fan

Putting confetti on the fan as a prank is definitely one of the best as it is harmless but fun to be caught in a confetti rain storm. This prank is also fairly simple. Pour confetti on the top of the fan blades.

Sometimes, the fan can be connected to the light switches so when someone turns on a light, the fan starts spinning.

This creates a bigger element of surprise. When someone turns on the light or the fan, confetti will sprinkle down from the ceiling and laughter is guaranteed.

3. Plastic wrap under the toilet

This a well-known and highly anticipated prank but when no one catches it, this prank can have some of the most disastrous effects. Take a piece of cling wrap and put it on top of the toilet bowl but underneath the toilet seat. When the unfortunate prankee needs to use the bathroom, they will be in for a nasty surprise.

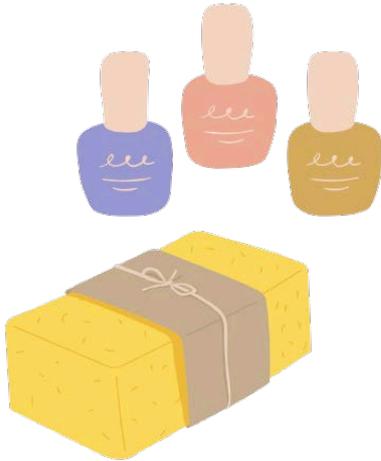


4. Shaving cream inside a food box

This is a good prank for food that comes wrapped in a box so that the actual food itself doesn't get ruined. If there is a relative or friend that is known for eating the same foods everyday, fill the box with shaving cream. When the very reliable prankee sticks their hand in the box to grab a granola bar, they will instead find themselves holding a bunch of shaving cream. This prank is perfect for those who want a mild but fun prank

5. Clear nail polish on soap

Another classic prank is putting clear nail polish on soap. The execution is easy. Simply take clear nail polish and put a coat of it on a dry bar of soap. Then put it in the shower. The soap won't lather when being used so the prankee is left with a useless bar of soap.



6. Changing phone wallpaper

Coming downstairs to find George Clooney or Shrek as your new phone wallpaper is certainly a shock but one of the easiest pranks to pull off if you know the prankee's phone password.

Once you're in, google some pictures of what you want the phone wallpaper to be and screenshot them so they are in the camera roll.

Then go to settings and then wallpaper. Change the wallpaper to the new pictures.

If you want to be really thorough, go back into the camera roll and delete the wallpaper pictures to cover some tracks. This is a fantastic prank and perfect for April 1.

april

- fools day -

prank checklist:

1. spray bottle w/ vinegar
2. confetti ceiling fan
3. plastic wrap toilet
4. food box with shaving cream
5. a bar of useless soap!
6. wallpaper surprise



**PRANK
AT YOUR
OWN RISK**

The Power of Poetry

Danielle Mello

As winter becomes restless
Desperation increases for spring
To unleashing the rebirth of the world

Ivy will dance and
Flowers will find the way back home
A metamorphosis
From mourning to relief

Mother nature's creatures
Will awaken with the sun
Hibernation becomes a lesson of the
past

This is a poem by Chloe D'Agostino, a member of the Chelmsford High School Poetry Club. Meeting on Wednesdays after school, this club devotes itself to writing, examining, and even performing poetry.

They partake in a variety of activities that include attending poetry recitations and competitions. Most important of all, they absorb all of the benefits that creating poetry has to offer, especially in these harsh, isolating times.

Throughout the years, poetry has proven itself extremely valuable for our health and learning. Before you disagree, I don't mean the poetry forced upon you in school, but the words that can emerge from oneself

naturally. When created with passion and interest, poetry can become a creative outlet that has many different kinds of benefits. Namely, poetry can help with the essential development of both academic and psychological skills!

1. Cognitive Learning and Skills

One of the benefits of poetry that is brought to light in school is the impact on language and word choice. Using poetry to express oneself can help to understand words and their meanings in a deeper way. Thus, it can be a great tool for learning a higher level of vocabulary, as many poems tie complex words into their stanzas for metaphors and vivid imagery.

The difficult words can be researched, and then these words can be brought into your own writing. A more developed understanding of vocabulary can make a tremendous difference, even in endeavors after high school.

Beyond the language portion, poems can also help readers and writers develop a richer perception of tone, themes, and rhythm. In fact, teachers often introduce poetry to students at younger ages to develop these very skills. An important portion of writing is developing a smooth flow of words, a lesson that educators bring to the

Observing poetry can be beneficial as a gateway to more complex writing pieces; by developing strong rhythm and mood in poetry, meaningful essays and stories later on can be written with more flourish. Needless to say, a good poem could help to inspire the essays that you've been procrastinating to write!



2. Emotional Expression and Healing

Poetry is not limited to any particular style or format, which allows for a thoughtful, limitless exploration of one's own feelings through writing. In whatever shape it may be in, poetry can help people to stay in touch with their own emotions and understand them in a clearer way.

The usage of abstract words and phrases to convey a difficult subject can be extremely relieving and clarifying for poets. Having a rough, stressful week? Your feelings can be vented out onto a page that can help you sort through your thoughts. Feelings can be explained through poetry that are impossible to communicate in everyday speech or writing.

Releasing pent up emotions every now and then is extremely important for your mental health. Using poetry to tap into your emotions can help you to express them in a helpful, powerful way! Throughout history, poetry has been recognized as a beneficial outlet for one's emotional health—this has even been documented to occur with soldiers! In the world wars, poetry of soldiers coping with trauma have been found and preserved.

These strategies can even make appearances in modern forms of therapy as more and more therapists utilize poetry and expressive writing in sessions. Give poetry a chance and you may find yourself a new stress relief method!

3. Impact on Others



Now more than ever, the importance of building a community is tremendous. One way of connecting with the people around you is through expressive forms of art, including poetry! Words are a powerful tool that can be used to leave an impact on others.

Leaving people inspired, bittersweet, or moved in some way with your work is one of the best parts of poetry. By sharing your voice, you could be someone with the power to uplift others.

One way to accomplish this is through joining the Poetry Club here at Chelmsford High School. This club focuses not only on the writing of poetry, but on its sharing and expression.

A specific topic focus for this club is slam poetry, a performance poetry that emphasizes rhythm and emotional assertion. With hand gestures, clapping, stomping, and fluctuation of the voice, these poems are meant to take the audience on a journey.

Slam poets use these opportunities to highlight personally important issues with an engaging style rather than a boring lecture.

Joining in on this activity could elevate your voice and allow topics you are passionate about to be heard by those around you. You could even kickstart change!



The Poetry Club also has other means of spreading the benefits of poetry. Club members often have the opportunity to submit poems to other establishments to be read aloud, with one example being the Garden Club.

Sharing and inspiring others is one of the perks this club has to offer —there

are an infinite amount of topics to be covered that could be shared with virtually anyone.

Even beyond the club, sharing your poems on social media platforms could help to support and inspire someone else!

To summarize, poetry has a variety of cognitive and healing benefits that should be taken advantage of, especially throughout this pandemic.

The Poetry Club takes place in room 341 on Wednesdays after school from 2-3pm. If you have any questions, you can direct them to the advisor, Mrs. Parato, at :

[paratol@chelmsford.k12.ma.us!](mailto:paratol@chelmsford.k12.ma.us)